



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SUPERSTITIONS CONCERNING DEATH-SIGNS.—If any evidence were needed that the America of the last century was as full of popular superstitions as other lands, it would be found in the following doggerel, contributed by a member of the American Folk-Lore Society, Mrs. Davies Wilson of Cincinnati, who learned the rhyme from the lips of her mother, and knows it to have been also familiar to a previous generation. It is not known that the lines have been printed :—

As Betty and Billy were courting one night,
 "Gramercy!" cried Billy, and turned with affright.
 "Gramercy! dear Betty! A funeral is near,
 For the death-bell is tolling e'en now in mine ear."
 Now Betty applied her left ear to his right;
 Pit-a-pat went her heart, and her hair stood upright.
 While Betty was listening, it happened just then
 That the clock in the parlor began to strike ten.
 "I hear it!" cried Betty, and panted for breath.
 "T is surely a death-watch,—a token of death.
 Alas for us all! What terrible signs!
 Tray howls every night, and the tabby cat whines;
 To-day, while a-spinning, out flew a live coal,
 And here in my petticoat burned a great hole.
 Three times in the candle a coffin I've seen,
 Which signifies death; or pray, what does it mean?"
 "To be sure it means death," replied Will, with a groan;
 "Some one in this house will be dead very soon;
 At this moment the peach-tree is in second bloom,
 And the grass is decayed on the family tomb.
 Last night, as I passed by the churchyard alone,
 A whippoorwill sat on the marble tombstone,
 And just at that moment a shooting star fell
 Plump into the graveyard and sparkled like ——."
 "Don't swear!" exclaimed Betty, and seized Billy's arm.
 "God forgive me!" cried Will, "I don't mean any harm;
 But as I was saying, a death will take place,
 For the signs are as plain as the nose on my face.
 While riding old Dobbin (old Dobbin ne'er skeers),
 At the gate of the churchyard he pricked up his ears,
 And started aside with a terrible snort,
 And gazed at the yew-tree, and breathed very short.
 So I mumbled a prayer and my bosom I crossed,
 For I knew that old Dobbin was spying a ghost."
 "Lord! Billy!" cried Betty, "don't frighten me so!
 Good luck! don't you think that the candle burns blue?"
 "As blue as my hat: and I wish I may die
 If I don't smell brimstone." "Oh, Law! so do I!"
 And while they were sniffing and snuffing in fright,
 A puff from the window extinguished the light.
 The lovers both started, and sad to relate,
 Their stool was capsized on the tail of the cat.
 The cat screamed aloud; the lovers both roared,
 Which roused up a dog in the corner, that snored.

And now there was spitting and barking and biting,
And squalling and screaming and scratching and fighting.
At this moment old Cuffy ran into the room,
And snatched up a firebrand and waved through the gloom.
They saw him, half naked, and blacker than night,
With red rolling eyeballs and teeth grinning white,
And both in a panic fell down on their knees,
Crying, "Sweet Mister Devil ! oh, pray ! if you please !"
Old Cuffy replied, with a ludicrous stare,
" I'll war'nt I'll tell Massa what debils you aire."
And thus ends the uproar, and thus ends my song ;
In brief, to be short, one should never be long.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ZOOLOGICAL AND BOTANICAL FOLK-LORE.—Having undertaken the preparation of a bibliography of zoölogical and botanical folk-lore, I should be glad to receive titles of books, pamphlets, or magazine or other articles relating in whole or in part to the subjects of natural history superstitions, or folk-medicine. The fullest possible statement of the title, number of pages, edition, and publisher of any book reported would be desirable. Address, Mrs. Fanny D. Bergen, 17 Arlington Street, North Cambridge, Mass.

RECORD OF AMERICAN FOLK-LORE.

FOR NATIVE RACES.

GENERAL : F. Borsari. *La Letteratura degl' indigeni America.* Napoli, L. Pierro. 8vo, pp. 76.

CANADA. — Émile Petitot. *Traditions Indiennes du Canada Nord-Ouest (1862-1882).* Textes Originaux et Traduction Littérale. Alençon, 1888. 8vo, pp. vi., 446.

In 1887 Mr. Petitot published an extensive collection of traditions obtained among the Indian and Eskimo tribes of the Mackenzie Basin. The present volume forms a valuable supplement to this publication, of interest to the philologist as well as to the student of folk-lore. It is almost impossible in a free translation to render the characteristic features of traditions, more particularly of mythologic tales, and for this reason original texts are of the greatest value. It is unfortunate that Petitot has not given in his book some details on his method of collecting and reducing to writing these tales. Their style is so uniform and civilized that we cannot help thinking the collector had some influence upon the narrator. As a rule, Indian tales contain certain formulas which are always told in the same way while the text of the rest of the tale is the work of the story-teller. These formulas are of the greatest value to the student, and ought to be carefully recorded.